



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Division of Health Professions Licensure
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TO: All Authorized Advanced Practice Registered Nurses
FROM: Board of Registration in Nursing
RE: Prescriptive Authority

The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (Board) regulations related to Advanced Practice Registered Nursing (APRN), including prescriptive practice, is available from the State House Bookstore, at (617) 727-2834, for a nominal fee. Ask for 244 CMR, sections 3.00 – 9.00. The regulations are also available online at: <http://www.mass.gov/dpl/boards/rn/cmr/24404.htm>. The relevant regulations are in section 244 CMR 4.00.

Nurses seeking the privilege to prescribe from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health- Drug Control Program (DPH-DCP) will be required to provide evidence of the Board's authorization to practice as APRN including, a copy of a current Massachusetts RN license. Applications for authorization are available online at: <http://www.mass.gov/dpl/boards/rn/forms.htm>

All APRN who are seeking prescriptive authority in Massachusetts must register with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health- Drug Control Program (DPH-DCP). The application for a Controlled Substance Registration Number is available online at: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/dcp/dcpmcscr.htm> or by calling (617) 983-6700.

For prescribing controlled substances in Schedules II - V, you must also obtain a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration number. To be eligible for a DEA number you must have a state Controlled Substance Registration Number or have an application pending for it from the DPH-DCP. The application is available online at: http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drugreg/reg_apps/onlineforms_new.htm

PLEASE NOTE: *It is not legal to prescribe or write orders for any prescription drug or controlled substance until the appropriate state and federal registration numbers are issued.*

All of the Board regulations, which refer to a supervising physician, refer to the physician with whom the nurse has developed and signed guidelines for prescribing practice. There are other criteria for the supervising physician defined in the regulations. It is important that you be familiar with them. The Board of Medicine has promulgated regulations at 243 CMR 2.10, which further describe the role and responsibilities of the supervising physician.

The supervising physician must review the nurse's prescribing practice at least every three months with the exception that initial prescription of Schedule II drugs must be reviewed within 96 hours. Prescribing guidelines must also include how frequently the nurse and supervising physician will review *initial* prescriptions issued by the nurse, how this will be done, and how it will be documented.